

RECOGNIZING DEVIN HARRIS

HON. TAMMY BALDWIN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 23, 2004

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Devin Harris of the University of Wisconsin men's basketball team, who was recently named the 2004 Big Ten Conference player of the year. Devin is only the fifth Badger player in history and the first since 1950 to receive the honor. He led his team to a twenty-four and six record entering the NCAA tournament and a second-place finish in the Big Ten while scoring over twenty points a game. He was also among the Big Ten leaders in assists, steals, assist-to-turnover ratio, and three-point field goal percentage. In addition to being the player of the year, Devin was the only unanimous first team all-conference selection, and was also named the Most Outstanding Player of the Big Ten Tournament after leading the Badgers to the tournament championship, the first in school history.

Beyond statistics and awards, Devin has continually amazed the Badger faithful with his effervescent style of play and penchant for playing even better when it mattered most. His silky smooth ballhandling and signature step-back jump shot contribute to his astounding ability to break down a half-court defense and find a way to score, while his speed and leaping ability have led to some spectacular dunks in transition. His versatile game makes it difficult for one defender to stay with him, which opens up opportunities for his teammates, and he consistently gets them the ball when those opportunities arise. Everyone plays better when Devin is on the court, and that is what makes him a truly special player.

If Badger fans needed any other reason to love Devin, he is also a homegrown talent, coming to UW from Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, where he was the state high school player of the year at East High. Even with that, however, it would have been difficult for anyone to predict that he would develop into the player that he has. This past fall, when the Big Ten coaches named him the pre-season conference player of the year, Devin was as surprised as anyone. But there is no surprise left in awards for Devin Harris. No one who saw him play this year could doubt that he deserves this honor, and our recognition.

SONGS OF CUBA, SILENCED IN AMERICA

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 23, 2004

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of my colleagues an article by singer-songwriter Jackson Browne, which appeared in yesterday's March 22, 2004, edition of the New York Times. As my colleagues are aware, for nearly three decades, Mr. Browne has been a popular and valuable contributor to American music and culture. Cementing his role and contributions to American culture, last week, on March 15th, Mr. Browne was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

In his article, "Songs of Cuba, Silenced in America," he laments and challenges the current U.S. policy of denying visas to Cuban artists who wish to perform and share their musical art with the U.S. public or who are being honored for their work by their American peers. I couldn't agree more with Mr. Browne when he describes these artists' work as a way for Americans to hear in song a reflection of the hopes, dreams and aspirations of the Cuban people—a cultural communication that is frustrated by a U.S. policy which aspires itself to suffocate all such contact and communication.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly believe that when change does come to Cuba we will deeply regret the lack of contact, communication, and genuine understanding between the United States and the people of Cuba. I believe the United States would better prepare for change by encouraging now the free exchange of ideas, the freedom of travel, the rich exchange of culture and heritage between our two peoples, including our artists and ordinary Americans.

I want to thank Mr. Browne for sharing his views and insights, and I commend his article to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

[From the New York Times, March 22, 2004]

SONGS OF CUBA, SILENCED IN AMERICA

(By Jackson Browne)

LOS ANGELES.—Carlos Varela, the great Cuban singer-songwriter, applied for a visa to come to the United States to sing his powerful, amazing songs. He had concerts planned in Miami, New York and Los Angeles. Our government turned him down.

Visas have been denied to other Cuban artists because their visits are "detrimental to the interests" of our country. In essence, the government says that if Carlos Varela plays concerts in the United States, the money he makes would go to Fidel Castro. This is untrue. In Cuba, renowned artists keep much of what they earn, because the government does not want them to leave the country and live somewhere else. Yet, the Bush administration used the same reasoning to keep Ibrahim Ferrer, of the Buena Vista Social Club, and Manuel Galbán from attending the Grammy award ceremony in Los Angeles last month. (Both men won awards.)

It also forced the postponement of concerts by the Spanish flamenco master Paco de Lucía because he plays with Alain Pérez Rodríguez, a Cuban-born bassist. I congratulate the State Department on finally determining that Mr. Pérez is not "detrimental to the interests" of our country, although those of us who were able to reschedule and hear him play this month know that he is a truly dangerous man.

In a profound way, our government takes on the role of oppressor when it tries to control which artists will be allowed access to our minds and our hearts. We may think we are isolating Cuba with our embargo and our travel restrictions, but it is we Americans who are becoming isolated. People travel to Cuba from Australia, Britain, Canada, Italy and Spain—countries we consider staunch allies.

United States foreign policy toward Cuba is unpopular in America, and for good reason. It stops Americans from traveling to Cuba and Cubans from coming into the States. It stops us from sharing medicine with the ill and restricts our ability to sell food to the hungry. This policy is an outdated relic of the cold war and exists only as a political payoff to Republican-leaning Cuban-American voters in Miami.

The policy of punishing Cuba works only when Americans see the angry face of Cuban

repression. But in the face of Carlos Varela, and the language of his music, Americans would not find the mask of a demon, but hear the aspirations of people just like themselves.

Perhaps the most prominent paradox here is that Carlos Varela is known not only for his talent, but also for his courage to speak out through his songs, many of which have been interpreted as critical of the Cuban government.

While these young Cubans respect the accomplishments of their leaders, they are ready, indeed impatient, to run their own affairs. They want freedom for themselves and independence for their country. They want the new Cuba to be created by the Cuban people, not by the United States.

I believe in justice and human rights in the United States and abroad. I am saddened by the treatment by the Cuban government of the political dissidents in their country. I long for the day when there is freedom for both Cubans and Americans to travel in both directions across the Straits of Florida without undue interference by their governments.

I want this freedom not just for artists but for all people, American and Cuban, who live each day in the hope for a just and prosperous future. Giving Carlos Varela a visa to sing in America would be a good way to begin.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CHRISTOPHER JOHN

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 23, 2004

Mr. JOHN. Mr. Speaker, I unavoidably was absent last Thursday. Had I been present, I would have voted on Roll Call 66—"no"; on Roll Call 67—"no"; on Roll Call 68—"yes"; on Roll Call 69—"yes"; on Roll Call 70—"yes"; on Roll Call 71—"yes."

INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO END PENALTY FOR CITIZENSHIP

HON. ED CASE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 23, 2004

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bill to ensure that family members who have petitioned to immigrate into the United States are not penalized as a result of an award of citizenship to a sponsoring parent or spouse.

My office has been involved in many cases in which my constituents are caught in a contradictory situation. If a legal resident sponsor of immigration applicants becomes a U.S. citizen, the petition he or she filed as a legal permanent resident is essentially moved from the second preference category to the first preference category with accompanying alteration of the category priority date.

While this is not a problem for most, as the wait list for the first preference category is generally shorter, it has become a problem for some, primarily our families from the Philippines. It is here that, unfortunately, the quota for unmarried sons or daughters of American citizens is longer than that for unmarried sons and daughters of legal permanent residents. As a result, the wait time for some petitions is